

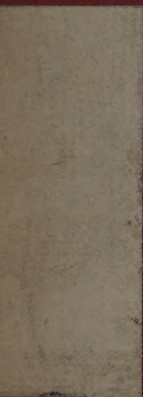
# PHILOCTETES

AND OTHER

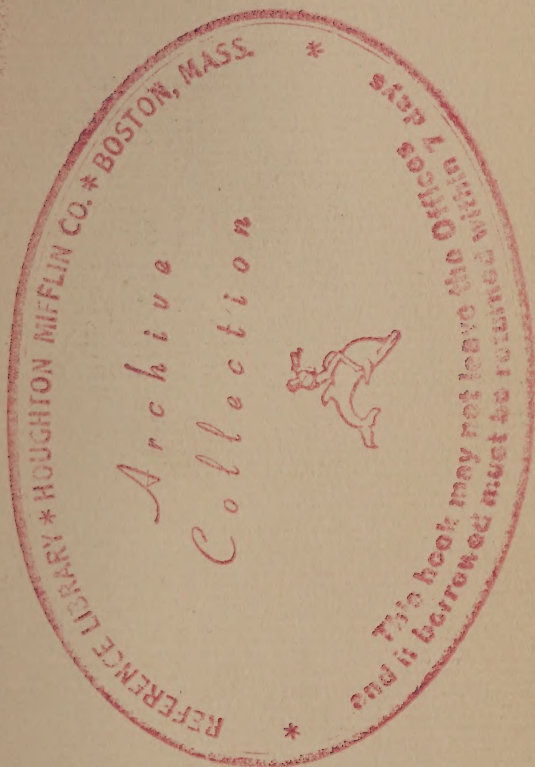
• POEMS AND SONNETS •



• J. E. NESMITH •















# PHILOCTETES

AND OTHER

POEMS AND SONNETS

BY

J. E. NESMITH

CAMBRIDGE

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1894

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# SONNETS.





## SONNETS.

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### FORTUNE.

WHAT strength in gods or men that shall delay  
Imperial Fortune and her destinies,  
Her progress thro' the stormy centuries ?  
Her step is forth, and now she 's far away  
Upon the mountains welcoming the day,  
Outstripping Genius and her faculties :  
The tempest speeds her golden argosies,  
She whispers to the winds and they obey :  
Deserting kings for nondescripts and clowns,  
The idol of obsequious History,  
Inconstant even to inconstancy,  
And cloaking thieves and fools in costly gowns,  
Her hands are fill'd with wreaths and glittering  
crowns, —  
With sceptres and with swords of victory.

## "THE YOKE OF CONSCIENCE."

CONSCIENCE has neither rank, nor place, nor  
lands ;

No bribe, temptation, amulet, or gold ;

But crown'd and girt with terrors manifold

She grasps the soul with strong and naked hands ;

Her stern, strict sceptre and austere commands

Make weak men brave and laggards of the bold ;

Defeated thrice and seeming dead and cold,

She cometh as Remorse with stricter bands.

Her throne is 'stablished upon vanquish'd wills ;

No sacrifice of trivial wine or corn

She asketh, but the strong desire first born,

The ruby moisture that the heart distills ;

Her road lies up among the savage hills,

Yet there the tenderest feet have often gone.

## CONSCIENCE.

CONSCIENCE, like a crusader in distress,  
Under his heavy iron panoply,  
Beneath the flaming vault of Syrian sky,  
Perplex'd by Paynims, swift and merciless,  
Is girt and harried by an eager press  
Of pagan foemen, — Insult, Lust, and Lie, —  
And weaken'd, under Fate's intolerant eye,  
By the rude armor of her righteousness.  
How may blunt truth and honesty provide  
Mean ways for her, the child of knightly times?  
Or honor strive with the dishonest mimes,  
Gamblers and brigands, who have cast aside  
Honor and probity and fear and pride,  
And lightly bear the burden of their crimes?

## HOPE.

Is there no mockery ambush'd in thine eyes,  
Thou "naked promisor of kingdoms," Hope, —  
Watching the rose of expectation ope,  
Breathing thine unabash'd auguries  
Before the cold unconscious destinies,  
Or dropping down thy short and slender rope  
Into the dark abysses where we grope,  
Or leading on our eager fantasies?  
Likest the moon thou sufferest thy eclipse  
Undimm'd ; skilled like the Sibyl to repair  
Disaster and escape each sudden snare ; —  
And like a girl whose fairy finger-tips  
Lure back the twice betray'd, with rosy lips  
Disarmest the dejection of Despair.

“THAT TWICE-BATTERED GOD OF  
PALESTINE.”

DIDST thou not smile in very truth, old World,  
When young Enthusiasm touched thy shield,  
That giant disk whose dints and scars reveal'd  
Thine ancient prowess, — and, bright-eyed, unfurl'd  
His fair new banner, thickly gemmed and  
    pearl'd ;  
Braving the brand that thou alone canst wield,  
'Neath which so many vigorous hopes have  
    reel'd,  
Helpless, into the dust ensanguined hurl'd ?  
Vain is the pygmy war we wage, light-arm'd  
In ardent youth, with thee who stand'st enorm,  
Strategic, cold, remorseless, unalarm'd, —  
Biding th' eternal menace of Reform,  
The Prophet's zeal, the Anarch's curse, un-  
    harm'd, —  
Crushing with thy huge weight each threaten'd  
    storm.

## PATIENCE.

VANQUISH'D to-day, she neither doubts nor fears ;  
Already she beholds each fallen spire  
Refashion'd nearer to the heart's desire.  
Like Hope upon her anchor poised, she hears  
The unborn triumph of her toiling years ;  
Awaiting with a confidence sublime  
The outcrop of the teeming womb of Time,  
The perfect form of all her whirling spheres.  
Lo ! not the wars and armaments of kings,  
The bursts of genius in its fickle mood,  
Are pregnant with the most enormous birth ;  
Nor thunder menacing the sullen earth,  
Nor the roars in a lion-haunted wood,  
But Patience brooding over future things.



## “BACKED WITH RESOLUTION.”

WHAT shall delay the tempest-baffling Will  
Her triumph over time ; who gathers force  
Like some swift stream in its resistless course ;  
In whom is such a warranty of skill  
The fretful voice of doubt is hush'd and still ;  
Whose hopes are shadows of approaching things ;  
Whose wishes have the power of feet and wings ;  
Whose brimming coffers Fortune loves to fill ?  
What of the mind without her ? Lo ! a star  
Pitch'd wildly from his sphere, — a vacant car  
Hurl'd on by reinless steeds, — a wisp of straw  
Blown round a chaff-strewn floor, — an insect  
ground  
In the great wheels of the wide world, roll'd  
round  
Forever by unalterable law.

## MELANCHOLIA.

METHOUGHT in dreams I journey'd long ago —  
Deep in an ancient forest I awoke :  
Beneath the knotted knees of a gnarled oak  
A witch in woman's form rocked to and fro,  
Chaunting a sullen canticle of woe,  
Of lovelorn maids, lost hopes, and hearts that  
    broke ;  
Or sitting silent brooded by the smoke  
A dying fire sent upward, burning low.  
Gigantic twisted boughs, dusky with night,  
Rose round, behind which burn'd the elfin light  
Of dropping day, knell'd by the plaining wind ;  
A weird phantasmal spot, fitting the spells  
Of Melancholia, subtlest fiend that dwells  
Thron'd in the dead waste places of the mind.

## SUBTLE SPRING.

WHAT subtle touch upon what secret string,  
What naked bleakness of wind-wither'd bowers,  
What frozen barrenness of wintry hours,  
What sick surmise, forlorn imagining,  
Makes sad the haunting melody of Spring;  
Her songs, her pomp, her verdure and her  
    blossoms,  
Her fronds, her coronals, and' eddying plumes, —  
While all the cherubs of the morning sing?  
Subtle as Sphinx is she, too subtly wise  
To dull the soul with undisturbed content;  
But with suggestions sad and subtly blent,  
She weaves in her enchanting mystery  
Musings and thoughts that touch eternity, —  
The songs of April and the breath of sighs.

## FORTUNE'S INJUSTICE.

AGAINST what patient labors she has sinn'd,  
The Gypsy, in whose gift an unjust fate  
Has put the treasure and the mines of Ind,  
The purple and the ermine of the state :  
Who robs the toiler of the fruits of toil,  
Whom labor in rude comfort might uphold,  
While rifling all the world for glittering spoil  
To lightly shower "barbaric pearl and gold."  
Does she not weary of her vain expense  
For aye enriching fools at so much cost ?  
For when their smiling faces give offense  
From fool to fool the golden ball is tost.  
And like an eagle, thief and robber lord,  
Her eyes desire the shepherd's slender hoard.

•

THE STATUE OF LORENZO DE'  
MEDICI.

MARK me how still I am ! — The sound of feet  
Unnumber'd echoing thro' this vaulted hall,  
Or voices harsh, on me unheeded fall,  
Placed high in my memorial niche and seat,  
In cold and marble meditation meet  
Among proud tombs and pomp funereal  
Of rich sarcophagi and sculptur'd wall, —  
In death's elaborate elect retreat.  
I was a Prince, — this monument was wrought  
That I in honor might eternal stand ;  
In vain, subdued by Buonarroti's hand,  
The conscious stone is pregnant with his thought ;  
He to this brooding rock his fame devised,  
And he, not I, is here immortalized.

## CÆSAR.

MEN hate a tyrant, yet but few could hate  
The first strong Cæsar with his falcon eye ;  
Who cross'd the Rubicon reluctantly ;  
Whom Mars and wise Minerva both called great :  
Whom none might pique or turn or irritate ;  
“ Acer, indomitus,” — profound, urbane,  
Alert, intrepid, temperate, humane ;  
A tyrant thro' the tyranny of Fate ;  
The polish'd scholar of a polish'd age ; —  
Second to none with tongue or sword or pen ;  
Fitted to govern, lead, and flatter men ;  
Dispute with Cleopatra or a sage ; —  
“ Engaging Cæsar who with grace and ease  
Could join the arts to ruin and to please.”



## THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA.

WHEN on the blazon'd page of History,  
With all the pomp of ancient worlds inscroll'd,  
I see the mighty centuries outroll'd,  
Rome rising, Carthage falling, Athens free, —  
Then the great vision of the midland sea,  
Enriching all with freights of orient gold,  
Whose shores were palaces and empires old,  
Beams forth in splendor, light, and majesty ; —  
Eternal theatre of high romance,  
Whose skies serene matured a perfect art,  
Unhous'd dull life to beautify it more,  
Drew empire from all trivial cognizance,  
Gave her a world of sunlight for her chart,  
Splendor to peace, magnificence to war.

## ROME.

THY ruins have outlived thy Nemesis,  
O Rome, once War's imperial votaress ;  
Whom Tiber knew unchaste and merciless,  
Like those proud Queens passed to the realms of  
Dis,  
Helen, and Mary, and Semiramis.  
While Thebes lay buried in the wilderness, —  
While owl and bat and snake and leopardess  
Dwelt in the chambers of Persepolis, —  
The ages flocked as they still flock to thee ;  
And now, around thy everlasting throne,  
New powers spring up that Scipio might own ;  
New legions rise, like those that once led forth  
Their irresistible eagles, east and north,  
From Caledonia to the Euxine Sea.

## VOICELESS VICTORY.

METHOUGHT my sun of Austerlitz should dawn  
With all prophetic splendor in the sky,  
With battle music on the breezes borne,  
With pæans and with pomp of victory :  
There should be thrones possessed, and banners  
    flown

From gay pavilions and proud castle walls ;  
And trophies high uphung, and trumpets blown  
On Capitolian hills, in temple halls.  
Is this my day of triumph ? The gray morn  
Unnoticed with swift sandals steals away ;  
There are no voices on the silent air,  
As all were on some senseless errand gone ;  
No new-found jeweled sceptre do I sway, —  
The blessing stole upon me unaware.

## COUNTERFEITS.

No powerful rampart nor impregnable wall  
Avails, if fix'd and inexorable fate  
Has lodged a secret foe within the gate,  
And seats him at the feast and in the hall.  
Better an army's peremptory call  
Without the postern, than a secret hate ;  
Should one's own coward nature lie in wait  
For him, that enemy is worse than all.  
The frowning foreheads of irresolute men  
Are like fine raiment put upon a fool,  
With imitated state and show of rule,  
Howe'er they bear them in another's ken ;  
Like a proud keep with flaunting banners gay,  
But honeycomb'd with treason and decay.

## PROTEUS.

ACCUSE me not that I am prone to change ;  
True I have roam'd in other fields than ours,  
Have rambled by far streams in meadows strange  
And pluck'd the broad-cupp'd foreign Lotus  
          flowers ;  
Among the dripping Naiads of the sea,  
Have found the rose-lipp'd pearl-incrusted shell ;  
Picked amber gum from the Arabian tree ;  
And cull'd the far sought fabulous Asphodel :  
Up the steep Alpine precipice have roved  
To snatch the feathers from an eagle's wing ;  
Deserted Plato and philosophy  
To deeply drink from the Pierian spring ;  
Yet Conscience calls it not inconstancy  
The Protean shapes of Beauty to have loved.

## IDEALS.

NOT the wise Sphinx, nor subtle reasonings  
Which hang great arguments on slender ropes,  
Can prove the bitter end of human hopes,  
Perforce confined to visionary things.  
The unborn chrysalis hath budding wings,  
And soon shall fly about earth's flowery slopes ;  
The doubt that now in husk'd darkness gropes,  
Ripening unseen, its own deliverance brings.  
Ungessed, unsought, each great idea lies  
In the prophetic mind it feeds and warms ;  
Waiting to clothe itself in deathless forms,  
In adamant, in iron porphyries ;  
As Thebes lay veiled from sight, awaiting birth,  
In Pharaoh's brain who wrought it on the earth.



## NATURA MALIGNA.

WHAT of the deep cold bubbling wells of scorn  
Cleft in thy heart, O World, whose youth is fed  
With countless generations of the dead ?  
What of thy sons, O Earth, whose bones out-  
worn  
Lie crumbling in the womb where they were  
born,  
While thy cherubic chorus rings full choir  
With salutation to the eastern fire,  
Mid airs auroral and bright dewes of morn ?  
O Earth, thou art too young and void of ruth ; —  
Albeit thy years are number'd with the stars,  
Deck'd like a bride before the chancel bars ;  
Insatiate as Durga's sanguin'd cup ;  
Each day a hecatomb is offer'd up  
To feed the fire of thy immortal youth.

## WHITE SQUALLS.

SERENE and smiling, the perfidious Days  
Are sometimes cruel in their loveliness ;  
Like lions whose sleek skins none dare caress,  
Whose treacherous eyes look forth with dreamy  
gaze,  
Whose rage like straw leaps in a sudden blaze :  
Let but a random tone disturb her rest,  
And lo, her eyes are fixed upon thy breast  
Like topaz lights or fiery chrysophrase.  
Beware the cloudless day of unstirred leaf,  
The thunder lurking in the sultry air, —  
Beware the breathless sea's mysterious cry,  
The low prophetic wailing of the reef ; —  
If azure arches Jungfrau's brow, beware  
The Terror hanging in the frosty sky.

## CARPE DIEM.

EAT thou and drink ; to-morrow thou shalt die.  
Time's stream disgorges into Acheron ;  
Be wise, ere yet it is thy Phlegethon :  
Drink in the air of life deliciously.  
If all like felons under sentence lie,  
To-day has yet its royal diadem ;  
Pluck off the ripe rose from its haughty stem  
Ere its red leaves are shrivel'd up and dry.  
Each Hour that comes is like a royal bride  
From over seas with gifts of pearl and gold ;  
Be swift to welcome her, — and vigilant ;  
Fling all thy gates and porches open wide, —  
Deck her with gems, and let the gods behold  
Her tower'd fortunes, crown'd and culminant.

## "THE APE AND TIGER."

"Now like a Macedonian oracle  
You speak," — so said Demosthenes and died,  
To foil the spears that would have pierc'd his  
side.

Again, at Formio, in that deep dell,  
By the Tyrrhenian sea, where Tully fell,  
The same unpitying voice was heard to cry;  
The same that bade the gladiator die, —  
Which Cæsar in his purple could not quell.  
Whether by mob or king exhibited,  
The brute in man is full of cruelty,  
Fierce ignorance and cold ferocity:  
Quoth Herod, "Bring me here John Baptist's  
head!"  
"Give us Barabbas!" so the rabble said,  
And sent the Christ to the accursed Tree.

## TRAGEDY AND SONG.

THE sea grows voiceful in the rushing shoal,  
A song of pure content ye shall not hear.  
What bitterness and mediæval fear  
Reflect their lurid hues on Dante's scroll;  
Reveal the tainted spirit's rueful goal;  
Illumine the profound Tartarean sphere,  
Encoiling Geryon, and the Harpies drear,  
Gorgon, and wretched Myrrha's ancient soul!  
So happy nations have no history;  
No crimson, thrilling, melancholy page;  
No names that sound in every clime and age;  
No Trasemene and no Chæroneæ, —  
No Cannæ, no Pharsalia, no Plataea, —  
No Salamis and no Thermopylæ.

## GATES OF PEARL.

THRO' gates of pearl, thro' rifts of lonesome sky, —  
Thro' cloudland, over heaven's azure field, —  
All night the moon moves on and bears on high  
The silver pageant of her burnish'd shield.  
With veils diaphanous of thinnest lawn  
She wreaths herself, or from the stark mid height  
All nakedly she beams, or far withdrawn  
Behind dark clouds rains forth a doubtful light.  
All night the earth like one beneath a spell,  
Dazed by the light that dawn'd upon her dreams,  
Looks up at the enchanting spectacle ;  
Dappled and patch'd with heaven's varying  
          moods, —  
The drifting shadows over pools and streams,  
The banks like snow that edge the dusky woods.

## “BLACK VESPER’S PAGEANTS.”

AGAIN the parting sun’s funereal pyre  
Burns in the wild and melancholy west,  
Watch’d by a solemn troop of clouds at rest,  
Whose vast and sombre countenances dire  
Are writ with ancient storms and wither’d ire :  
In elemental calm they lie depress’d  
Above the brooding earth’s broad dusky breast ;  
A still and incommunicable fire  
Glows in the dim brown depths of the tall pines,  
Aloof, serene, and unapproachable.  
Is it fact or fancy, when my thought divines  
A monstrous life in things insensible ;  
In clouds, in gloomy flame at sunsets drear,  
Pointing to each his anguish, rage, and fear ?

## THE EAGLE.


His hook'd talons grasp the wither'd tree ;  
He gazes round him, red in beak and claw ;  
Untrodden summits high above him soar,  
Beneath yawns an abyss, whence fitfully  
At times is blown a sound as of the sea,  
Pent in the caverns of some craggy shore ;  
The cataract sends up a muffled roar,  
Breaking the silence of eternity.  
The thunder rolls above him and he hears  
Faint echoes from the far-off world below ;  
Chainless and free, no strong compunctions grow  
Like vines about his will ; no tedious years  
Of toil unnerve his strength, no qualms, no fears ;  
Untrammelled as the winds which round him blow.



## ULTIMA THULE.

WHERE now is Ultima Thule? near at hand  
The spectral mountains of the scoriac moon,  
Illumin'd by a blanching desolate noon, —  
Craggs, summits, craters, — in strange sunlight  
stand :

A lifeless world ; — a mapp'd and charted land,  
Tho' seen by few. In the remotest skies  
What unimaginable scenes arise,  
Call'd up by Galileo's magic wand !  
Too bright her orb, but on its upper rim  
A notch'd and ragged silhouette appears, —  
A range of ghostly mountains stark and grim, —  
Batter'd and scarr'd by unreveal'd years ;  
Frontiers that edge the outside vacancy, —  
The farthest outpost in Infinity.



## VAIN COWARDICE.

"Frustra cruento Marte carebimus."

IN vain we shun, at feasts, with myrtle crown'd,  
The serried legion's glittering array,  
Whose eagles flash along the Appian Way  
To Antioch en route and Parthian ground :  
In vain we shun the ships of Ostia bound  
For Colchian seas beneath a stormy sky ;  
Or when the Thunder Crag at midnight cry  
With well barr'd windows shudder at the sound.  
Still the unresting years must bring in sight  
Cocytus winding thro' its oozy bed,  
Sad Acheron, river of endless woe :  
Nay, each veil'd Hour which comes with footsteps  
    light,  
Uncoiling her encircling scarf, may show  
Medusa's snaky hair and Gorgon's head.

## “QUEM TU MELPOMENE.”

WHOM Beauty lures apart with magic spell,  
Far from the town, the court, the field of arms, —  
Him shall no giant gains enrich, and swell  
The growing rent-roll of his glebes and farms ;  
For him no bay leaves shall be filleted ;  
No chaplets twined by the white hands of maids,  
Like laurel for the first bald Cæsar's head,  
Who sent so many to the Stygian shades :  
Him shall no powerful sword nor fortunate crime  
Fix brightly in the golden galaxy,  
Starlike in the dark firmament of time :  
Therefore imperious Beauty has for him  
Her deep recess'd pure vale of mystery,  
Rock-seal'd and guarded by the Cherubim.

“FRESH WOODS AND PASTURES  
NEW.”

THE churl may reap the crops, and cottage maids  
Bind up in harvest sheaves the ripen'd grain,  
Or homebound dance about the creaking wain ;  
The village Beauties bind their hair in braids,  
Or plight their troth in twilight woods and glades.  
Let the starv'd eagle scream, the lean wolf yelp,  
The toothless lion and the lion's whelp  
Keep to their noisome dens and Stygian shades.  
The churl may rest, the tired ox releas'd  
Go down in safety to the woodland well ;  
Yet other trophies may be lost or won,  
In hall or bower, at tourney or at feast,  
From knight or lady, Blancheflor or Florizel, —  
Lamiel, Lavaine, — Floris or Faramon.

## TO-DAY'S SCEPTRE.

WHAT drear encampment of encircling glooms,  
Or sick surmise of culminating fate,  
Can bid To-day put off her eddying plumes ;  
Her orb, her ornaments, and purpled state ;  
Her flowing robes of silk and flower'd vest ; —  
Now when the eyes of all the gods behold  
Her pomp, her diadem, and fulgent crest ;  
Her domes and cupolas of burnish'd gold ?  
What omen, dire portent, or oracle,  
Can make her put aside her jewelry ;  
Her crown and vestments sew'd with costly  
    beads ?  
Or still the sweet clash of her wedding bells, —  
Now when her chariot waits, — the frothy steeds  
Champ at their golden curbs impatiently ?

## LIFE'S BANQUET HALL.

Lo ! when the lamps that glitter'd on the wall  
Are darken'd and the merry feast is over,  
Who round the festal board would basely hover,  
Feeding on scraps ? Ay ! who so low would fall  
To beg the crumbs of some old festival,  
The broken bread of some old feast, where erst  
He sat like Alexander, to be curs'd  
And like a slave, scourg'd from the Banquet  
Hall ?

Better the graceful exit, — to depart  
Like one who scorns to ask a servile alms  
With greedy eyes and supplicating palms.  
So Cæsar, when the daggers pierc'd his heart,  
Left his wide realm with no unseemly cry,  
No supplication, no regretful sigh.

## THE WORLD WELL LOST.

THERE 's something just in the contempt and scorn  
Of lean ascetics for the garish world,  
Whose patient feet in some poor cell are furl'd,  
Clad in the skins of goats, unkempt, unshorn.  
Some spot remote, some place yet unforlorn,  
Which human baseness cannot spoil or touch,  
Happy is he who never sigh'd for such !  
Ay ! verily, how happy is he born  
On whom the jocund world has never pall'd,  
Whom its rough iron chain has never gall'd,  
Till sick at heart, he seeks to be alone ;  
As Sylla left his empire and his throne,  
Or Diocletian his imperial Rome  
To build on her frontiers his quiet home.

## PHILOCTETES.

YE deities, how ye afflict me still !  
A bleak and stony walk the Spirit plods  
Beneath the steadfast anger of the gods.  
Here daily my bare feet have paced, until  
A beaten track leads from my hut's rude sill ;  
Grief, pain, disease, despair, hold me at bay,  
As lean and hungry as a bird of prey,  
Upheld alone by the supporting will.  
What scaldings have I felt, what freezings, burns ?  
Hot, cold, and wet and dry, afflict by turns :  
If I yet live it seems a vile abuse ;  
Reason itself a thing depriv'd of use,  
Like spice in sepulchres and purple woofs,  
Or cavern crystals flashing from dark roofs.



## “DUSTED VELVETS.”

How all these violences tempt the Soul  
From her still cloisters and sequester'd bowers,  
Inglorious leisure and inactive hours !  
The spells that bound me can no more cajole ;  
Weary already seems the scriptur'd scroll.  
The restless stewards of superfluous time, —  
Up the steep Alpine precipice they climb  
To reach the eagle's scarp'd and rocky goal.  
The famish'd tempest-beaten sigh for rest ;  
Dreams of low-lying isles and tufted palms  
Creep under the tired lids of seamen's eyes :  
Couch'd on soft cushions under Persian skies,  
The sated Eastern monarch flies to arms,  
Strapping the disused armor round his breast.

## THE SENTINEL OF ACRE.

A LONELY spot ! the sentinel of God  
I stand, whate'er betide : bleak Powers they were,  
Implacable and stern, who placed me here ;  
With brazen shield and spear and massy rod  
Or mace injurious ; iron clad and shod,  
In frock of temper'd steel and metal pure ;  
And ten times folded patience to endure,  
Tho' my red blood incarnadine the sod.  
All times far off I hear the thunder-roll  
Of battle on the mountains and the mere ;  
The shouting of the captains, — sweeter sound  
Than music in still chambers breath'd around ; —  
While each inglorious hour I linger here  
Wedges the iron deeper in my soul.

## BARREN LABOR.

MOTHER of stillborn multitudinous dreams,  
Weary of heaven's barren husbandry,  
Of shepherding the clouds o'er wold and sea,  
Of silvering the placid pools and streams,  
Of pouring on the waste thy patient beams,  
Whose flowerless fields will never bloom for  
thee, —

Canst thou escape the morning's mockery,  
And mocking truths of daylight's threadbare  
themes?

Must thou, too, shudder at the laughing light,  
The sudden disenchantment of the day,  
The morning's rosy sweet felicity,  
And hostile truth's inhospitality;  
Pale from the triumphs of a lonely way  
And lonely labors thro' the still midnight?

## LOST LEGIONS.

WHEN ridden by the heavy hand of Fate  
A bitter thought is busy in my brain,  
Despair of self and scornful self-disdain, —  
Seeking some sin in this my poor estate,  
I dare not call myself unfortunate ;  
Forgetting that the triple Sisters reign,  
Counting no nicely balanced loss or gain,  
Blind to the powers on which men calculate.  
I sent an army forth of glittering hopes,  
But like the legions by that Roman lost,  
Not one returned to me of all that host,  
Lost, lost, all lost upon life's fiery slopes ;  
And still my Soul unto herself doth say,  
“ Varus, Varus, my legions, where are they ! ”

## FATE.

BECAUSE she came in armor, sword in hand,  
And had no mercy for my nakedness,  
I cas'd my limbs in knightly steel ; — no less  
Did she confound me in a barren land  
Of fiery suns and tracts of burning sand,  
Where I waxed faint beneath my iron press ;  
And lo ! she wore the wicked Paynim's dress,  
And pierc'd with arrows the vain shield I  
plann'd.

And when she left me with the lonely hope  
To reach the gates of my Jerusalem,  
Casting my armor on the dusty slope,  
Naked that sea of fire I could not stem ; —  
In the fierce heat my ancient wounds did ope,  
Baring the sting of her last stratagem.

## LIFE IN CAPTIVITY.

THE crystal brook runs quickly from its stain ;  
The joy of youth is thinly veiled in tears,  
Like April's face smiles out amid the rain ;  
Moist as a Naiad once, the healing years  
Bring back the Cupids to a widow's eye ;  
The rich that dally with superfluous hours  
Flaunt in such dyes and play as wantonly  
As do the ivory cups of vermeil flowers ;  
Not always did the Furies lash their prey,  
Orestes, hidden in some sacred bower ;  
Clouds and eclipses are soon roll'd away ;  
Yet must I under my affliction cower, —  
I cannot free my shoulders from the yoke,  
More strong than triple brass or ribs of oak.

## “IN SHACKLES TIRED.”

LET the tall sunflower flaunt its yellow gold,  
The crimson roses blush in burning row ; —  
They suffer nothing from the winter's cold ;  
They are not pinch'd with frost nor kill'd with  
snow ;

No mildew, blight, nor icy Lapland years  
Spoil their young buds. No frowning element  
Spreads terror thro' blithe Phillida's small ears,  
Strikes Phoebe into gloomy discontent.  
What rank and bitter potion have I drain'd,  
With beady drops of sullen Lethe stain'd ?  
If leaves could spring upon the riven oak, —  
If frozen streams could break their steely yoke, —  
Then, only then, I might shake off the god,  
Fling down his heavy staff and iron rod.

## TIME'S PERFIDY.

My hopes were like an army glorious  
Before this cruel war with Time began.  
I look'd to find a foe magnanimous,  
Not the dark ambush into which I ran,  
And brutal battles dim and perilous.  
But see how Time has trapp'd me in his coil  
And bent my neck with hand contrarious ;  
My days of life and youth become a spoil.  
Strange mad result of youth's high fantasies !  
What lustres here are dimmed — what ardors  
    bright  
Lie here undone in these dark strategies ?  
What glowing thoughts that for each gleaming  
    height  
Plumed their undaunted wings in arduous flight —  
What dreams, brave visions, shining auguries ?



## VAIN RESISTANCE.

REST and be quiet, since there is no ruth  
In the dull horologe of noiseless time :  
We are not made of such a stuff sublime  
As fits us for rebellion ; once in youth  
I quarrel'd with my lot, but now, forsooth,  
I lie as still as a tall deodar  
Uprooted by the storm ; too wise by far,  
Too feeble to rebel against the truth.  
Who shall contend with fortune ? What befell  
Iapetus and Dolor, huge of limb, —  
Who forced the gods to hide in woods and caves ?  
Or him the Hebrews held invincible, —  
Whom the Philistines snared, — and chain'd him  
“ Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves ” ?



PHILOCTETES AT LEMNOS.



## PHILOCTETES AT LEMNOS.

PHILOCTETES, CHORUS OF MARINERS.

CHORUS.

THIS way he comes with brooding eyes bent low ;  
Unheeding, wrapt in thought, dejected, slow,  
His speech is to himself or to the gods,  
Like one bruise'd deeply by their heavy rods.

PHILOCTETES.

I have been lonely as a widow'd hawk  
Upon the splinter'd pine-tree's hollow stalk ;  
Sick of the iron crags, — his perch all day, —  
Of ransacking a barren coast for prey.  
Alas how long have I look'd wistfully  
Across the tenantless and desert sea ?  
Question'd each cloud speck on the broad sea line,  
The flash of sunned white wings or sparkling  
brine, —

Expectant of some coming oar or sail ?  
In summer calms — or when the wintry gale  
Whiten'd yon aged crag, whose shatter'd form  
In cataract and thunder broke the storm ;  
The wild, torn skirts of tempest drifting by

With angry gleams and awful rifts of sky.  
In vain! for me no bright oar dips or shines;  
Among the gnarl'd oaks and bleak blown pines  
I roam like some grim beast in gloom and pain,  
In whom the hunter's arrows yet remain:  
Hateful to me my distant cabin smoke,  
Hateful the bleak blown pine and gnarl'd oak.  
My sinews take no rest, my mind no ease;  
No sound I hear except the plunging seas  
Dash'd on the rocks and in the echoing caves;  
And, roll'd and tumbled by the gloomy waves,  
The stones and shingle grating on the beach;  
And overhead the strident sea-fowl's screech.  
Ye sea-wash'd crags! Ye melancholy hills!  
Ye wind-blown pines and oaks and voiceless rills!  
Ye slimy pools with long green drown'd hair!  
Oh, why must I behold ye? Must I bear  
The sight of these gray rocks and barren seas  
Till horror makes them seem accomplices?

## CHORUS.

His tongue is bitter and the words are strong,  
But they have reason out of shame and wrong.

## PHILOCTETES.

Alas the small weak worm on which I trod,  
Unpitying as the least piteous god!  
Alas the shrill taunts and the scornful cries,

The fierce hard faces and the cruel eyes !  
My wool was prime and straightway I was shorn,  
Stript naked to the shearer's gaze and scorn ;  
Mock'd by my enemies ; betray'd, deceiv'd ;  
Of everything at one fell stroke bereav'd ;  
Deserted, robb'd, to groan in filth and rags,  
In solitude among the barren crags ;  
Outraged by gods and men ; unlov'd, unpitied, —  
By the Achæans overwatch'd, outwitted.  
Were there no black reefs in the rushing shoal,  
No ragged rims, no spik'd and rocky goal  
To stretch the ribs of their wreck'd ships upon ?  
No boiling surf to be their Phlegethon ?  
No gulfs to suck them down ? no violent gales  
With talons to tear out their masts and sails ?

## CHORUS.

Who shall take counsel with th' consummate gods ?  
Question, or mete them bounds, or stay their rods ?  
Ages yon pine stood up its stately height,  
Green robed, and prosper'd in the broad sunlight ;  
Fire in one moment came, behold it now,  
A hollow ruin'd stalk and broken bough.

## PHILOCTETES.

None ever strove with Fate and stood erect,  
Whose ordinance the gods themselves respect.  
What twistings have I felt ; what scalds and burns ?

What freezings, rigors, rendings ; what vile  
spurns, —

To testify the strength of Fate to men ?

Ten years confin'd, in sorrow three times ten,

With unseen rivets to this iron rock

Where eagles scream and myriad sea-gulls flock ;

Disabled, with no comrade to divide

My misery ; perplex'd and sorely tried

'Twixt unpermitted death, suppress'd desire,

That tortures like an unconsuming fire.

My wounds inflam'd, which no benumbing balm,

No bandage softly bound, can soothe and charm ;

No lavers cool, no ointment can abate, —

Rankle, ferment, exude and ulcerate.

The venom from the serpent's bite, spung'd up,

Absorb'd by the reluctant flesh, no cup

Holding narcotic spirits can assuage ;

No lulling opiate allay its rage ;

No quick, inquisitive, and ardent juice

Pursue it thro' the veins, by secret sluice,

And rob it of its strength : the fluid wrath

Passes uncheck'd along its narrow path,

To the occult and central pith ; there lives,

In scorn of potent drugs and purgatives,

In fierce ascendancy over the flesh,

Immix'd and tangled in its poisonous mesh.

Sometimes with pain I shriek aloud and tear

With frenzied hands my long and matted hair ;



Or cast upon the jagged flints and stones  
Writhe like a wounded snake ; with shrieks and  
groans,  
Curses and lamentations of despair,  
That seem in the profound and desert air  
Louder than human by the lonely main ;  
Thrice horrible, inhuman and profane,  
Reëchoed from the melancholy caves  
And mock'd by the innumerable waves.

## CHORUS.

Yet Hope survives to life's last periods,  
First known and latest lost of all the gods.

## PHILOCTETES.

Ay, ay, from sour affliction's lowest ditch,  
To crown'd and sceptred Fortune's topmost pitch,  
The gods can raise men up ; as easily  
Despoil them of their robes and dignity.

## CHORUS.

Reproach not thou the gods too readily,  
Nor think all heav'n in league to torture thee.

## PHILOCTETES.

'T is a far road for a brief human cry  
To reach the gods ; yet I must weep who lie  
Like an old galley wreck'd and cast away,

Moor'd to the wharf and falling to decay ;  
Despoil'd and subject to contempt and scorn,  
Forgotten and forsaken and forlorn ;  
Outlaw'd and heap'd with outrage, obloquy,  
In a contemptible obscurity ;  
Seeing no pity in another's eyes  
And buried from all use and exercise ;  
Uncomforted, uncounsel'd, unresign'd ;  
In agony and anguish of the mind.  
O days of shame ! O servile banishment !  
O hours of lethargy and discontent !  
Yet in my youth, ambitious and devoted,  
I thought myself not meant to live unnoted,  
Inferior, subaltern, and obscure ;  
Fate's iron hests unriddled yet, unsure.  
Austerely I was bred — by gulf and crag  
And rocky glen, pursued the stricken stag ;  
In forest shades, on foot, and void of fear,  
Robb'd of her frolic cubs the grizzled bear ;  
Nor ever to the wine flask had recourse,  
My thirst allaying at the stream's pure source,  
With the clear drops content and cooling brook  
Scoop'd in the hand : by nightfall overtook  
Slept where I chanced, upon a flinty couch,  
Fed from the contents of my frugal pouch.  
Soundly I slept and when the rising sun  
Glitter'd upon the gurgling water-run,  
And all along a golden belt of cloud

Shook keen-edg'd lightnings, with pure rays  
imbrow'd,

Already I had risen, with clear head,  
Trod the ascending path with springing tread;  
Nor envied those who gloat upon their wealth,  
Nor those who vaunt in pride of youth and  
health,

Flaunting like gaudy insects in the sun  
Thro' brisk and dissolute days and nothing done.  
Danger I courted, careless in what form  
Or visage grim it came, in calm or storm.

## CHORUS.

Who looks before him or foresees the end  
To which thro' many a maze his footsteps tend?

## PHILOCTETES.

Too soon I learn'd Fate's iron alphabet,  
Spell'd out her tangled scrawl and words of jet,  
In gyves, in exile, in captivity.  
Lo, I am prostrate like a fallen tree!  
Yet I remember what I was and mount  
The stream of thunder to its placid fount.  
I was a god in youth ere Time unveil'd  
His black and grisly obverse. Then I sail'd  
Over the shining circles of the world,  
Like a bright bird with tireless wings unfurl'd —  
A cloud that drifts before the indolent breeze —

A corsair voyaging illimitable seas,  
Frequent with isles that in the distance rest  
Like clouds of even in the golden west ;  
In climes where it seems always balmy spring,  
Where sleeps the halcyon with folded wing ;  
Where in thick clusters from the trellis'd vine  
The grape hangs purpling, ere the vats with wine  
Run over and their ruby blood is spilt ;  
Where winds blow softly and no frost can wilt  
The myrtle or the light green olive bowers,  
The tenderest spray or coronal of flowers.

## CHORUS.

Ay, thou hast suffer'd much, with evils curs'd,  
Unnumber'd, without stint — yet not the worst,  
Not crush'd by evil, worthy scorn and shame,  
Contempt of gods and men, dispraise and blame ;  
Like beasts that chew the cud, indifferent  
To blows or curses, praise or punishment.  
Too oft repay'd with scorn and obloquy,  
Great souls seem greater in adversity,  
In bondage, in neglect, in solitude ;  
Immovable, unconquer'd, unsubdued,  
Like Atlas stern and bleak, his naked form  
Bared to the lightning and the beating storm ;  
Inflexible whatever pangs they feel,  
Impenetrably arm'd as if in steel.  
The happy are on all sides vulnerable,

In fear and dread invoke the oracle,  
The bliss they prove has all too brief a date;  
Virtue alone is safe from change or fate,  
Whose nature is like iron, which when scourg'd  
Beneath the forger's blows, is clinch'd and  
purg'd;  
Like flint if struck yields unsuspected fire,  
And rugged sweetness like a storm-swept wire.

## PHILOCTETES.

Ay, something lives in my unfetter'd breast,  
Unvanquish'd yet, unalter'd, unexpress'd;  
Unbroken by the torrent that roll'd past,  
As yet unbow'd, unwither'd by the blast.  
I am not what I was; pure pain has power  
To nerve and purify like juices sour;  
These rigors give my heart a keener zest  
Triumphant over the extremest test.  
Ten years of life remov'd, with groans and pains  
Endur'd and lost to youth; yet much remains,  
Courage and the unconquerable mind, —  
A force that chains cannot subdue or bind.  
The gods are just — it were a cruel art  
To twist the sinews of a tiger's heart,  
To fashion his dread neck, were all his veins  
Screw'd flat and strangled under rigid chains.  
There must be bonds cast off and broken thralls  
Torn from the grasp of sullen seneschals,

And haughty crests shatter'd by sudden swords  
As when wrong'd nations rise against their lords.  
Ambrosial oils of genial influence  
Hope drops upon each rack'd and tortur'd sense ;  
Already golden auguries prelude  
Some brighter phase of dark vicissitude,  
And from their cold pure skyey summits hurl'd  
My spirits rage against the monstrous world,  
As crystal brooks, distill'd in purest air,  
Run sparkling from the granite mountains bare.

## CHORUS.

Wise is he who when most unfortunate  
Trusts in the gods and still confides in Fate.

## PHILOCTETES.

Out of my heart I speak confidingly.

## CHORUS.

Never believe the heart can gloze and lie.

## PHILOCTETES.

Divine appellants prompting me to speak  
I do believe. Mortality, too weak,  
Could not support unhelp'd these gyves, these  
chains ;  
Much less exult and triumph in these pains ;  
These motions of the spirit cannot err,

This barren crag is not my sepulchre.  
The gods reserve me for some act of worth  
Ere my regenerate dust returns to earth.  
Before me lies the world and therewithal  
Its princely firstlings, chief and principal ;  
Its fortunes rais'd amidst the galaxy ;  
Its captaincy and rule and primacy ;  
Its chiefdom of grave minds, heroic souls,  
And treasures heap'd upon its dazzling goals.  
The Future points to her victorious fields,  
To Fortune hedg'd about with spears and shields,  
Squadrons and squares and congregated swords,  
Submissive as the falcon midst its lords ;  
To Power enthron'd upon an eminence,  
To which men look with fear and reverence ;  
A station next the gods, to whom is given  
Sway over sun and moon and earth and heaven ;  
Whose joy it is to rule, — to rule, foresee,  
And govern all things in tranquillity ;  
Keeping the times of men and calendars  
Of the four seasons and the punctual stars.

## CHORUS.

Who on a sparkling world all life and light  
Need spur and goad himself? Who need in-  
cite  
His blood with fierce incentives, or apply  
A fillip to the immortal mind ?

## PHILOCTETES.

Ay, Ay!

Action has power upon life's iron heart  
To mould and fashion it with stubborn art :  
Yea, thought throws dust upon the jubilant face,  
The round and gloss of youth and manly grace,  
Where action spreads an amaranthine bloom  
And lends us all the heart of bride and groom.  
So much old Chiron taught me in my youth,  
With pious words of wisdom and of truth ;  
Inflam'd my breast with thoughts of fame, by  
which

Mortals are highest rais'd, most prais'd, and rich  
In honor and respect, and blaz'd abroad ;  
Taught me my strength to use it like a god.  
Enough there are who in a freak of fear  
Hide in a shallow cloud and stop the ear :  
What is it men should fear ? — the worst is death ;  
The common doom of all things drawing breath ;  
The babe has suffer'd it, weak womankind,  
To Styx and th' dark stream's cavernous damps  
resigned.

Nay, death in evil times shall seem no bane  
Most welcome sometimes in excessive pain ;  
The most desired of gods, and oft by me  
Invok'd ere now in sad sincerity ;  
Prompted thereto by the extremest grief,



The salve of all my sores and sure relief.  
Yea, pain is the last evil ; if intense  
Intolerable ; brooking no defense  
By patience, courage, or philosophy ;  
Finds in the stoutest some infirmity.  
Yet vile it is to drone thro' life, — to creep  
Inglorious to the grave, — to rest, to sleep,  
Like tatter'd trophies in an ancient hall,  
Or idle weapons rusting on the wall.  
Ay, what are men whom mutual zeal and love  
Of action, valor, fame, have ceased to move ;  
On whom the giant's robe of ancient times  
Flings loose its purple fleck'd with modern  
    crimes ;  
The shape alone surviving from their sires  
And the slow cooling of ancestral fires ;  
On whom the mighty invitations of this life,  
Its voices, visions, and victorious strife,  
Its valors to auspicious fortunes wed,  
Unheeded fall, like sods upon the dead !  
They but achieve the bliss of kine and sheep  
Who sleep and wake and still are half asleep,  
Who hoard and store themselves till thievish Time  
Pilfer their treasure and deflow'r their prime.

THE GRAND CAÑON OF THE COLO-  
RADO RIVER.

“He cutteth out rivers among the rocks.” — JOB.

## I.

THE harmonies of this unfathomable world, —  
The unimaginable music of the spheres, —  
Flow thro’ the universe with all the notes  
Of mystery and terror in their tones.  
The mighty Being burdens every star  
With perplex’d music, awful harmonies,  
Whose echo is the voice of winds and seas,  
The noise of torrents and the sounding fall  
Of ice cliffs in the cold and silent Alps.  
So night by night the solemn harmony  
Of nature, chaunted to the spiritual ear,  
Flows thro’ the depths of thought, tells how it  
past  
By desert plains and valleys terrible,  
Old lava floods and scoriac acres scurf’d  
With sulphur, dross of ore and mineral scum,  
High up on sombre Ætna’s ruined sides :  
By Krakatoa, and the earthquake peaks

Of topmost Chili, seen and heard far off.  
At night, by seamen plying from the cape :  
By polar oceans justling with huge bergs  
And icy sea crags, quarried from the cliffs  
That hang like spectres round the gleaming  
    shores,  
In the weird gloaming of an Arctic night.

## II.

Such desolations and strange scenes of death  
Might breed an awful doubt to stand in thought  
Like giants in the twilight of a world.  
Like a bold painter, for the picturesque  
In undiscover'd lands a traveler,  
Have I pursued the beautiful, and sought  
The great scarr'd visions of the antique earth ;  
Upon the desert's wither'd face I learn'd  
To trace the fading features of the Past ;  
And slept among its ruins desolate,  
Its rigid deserts thick with upright rocks  
Which rose in unimaginable forms  
Rear'd by the Tiger God of glowing Fire ;  
Travers'd by wild ravines in whose bright depths  
Tumultuous rivers glittered silently  
Beneath the midnight stars and nomad moon.  
The secret inmost dale of pathless woods  
Is not to me a solitary spot ;  
The peaceful fellowship of aged trees

To me has been a pleasure, and I love  
Upon a hush'd midsummer night to haunt  
The ancient pinewoods when the moonbeams  
                  slant

Thro' their immense and sombre colonnades,  
In silence wrapped and trancelike quietness,  
As if some Merlin of the Forest wrought  
A stillness round them, save what odorous winds  
Sigh fitfully in dreams, and stir the dews,  
Troubling the dusky giants in their sleep.  
And at the death of dim autumnal days  
Religiously I seek their columned aisles  
By sweet and solemn visions tenanted ;  
What time the bright and speechless sun de-  
                  scends

With slow unwilling steps the western sky,  
And burns upon the threshold of the night,  
A fiery meteor with flashing hair ;  
Leaving his once serene domain the prey  
Of darkness and the wreck of wandering fires,  
As fallen kings, dethron'd and driven forth  
Desert their doomed and blazing capitals ;  
Fusing the solid bulk of monstrous clouds,  
That glow and burn and stretched like smoulder-  
                  ing coals,  
Fringe the nocturnal woods with gloomy flame.

## III.

Eternal Nature, "Mother of Form and Fear,"  
At dusk, at midnight, I have question'd thee,  
Dumb Mother, eloquent with earnest eyes, —  
When thro' the fragrant gloom thy face immense  
Loom'd in the clouds, with awful indistinctness :  
Among the mountains of the world my feet  
Have moved beside the footprints of thy  
power ; —

The awful ruins of the first of days  
Around me I beheld, — the crags and peaks  
Of many a formidable hill which stood  
Of old environ'd with volcanian fire,  
Which the eternal lichen years have made  
The robber eagle's cold, unchanging haunt ;  
Which now in their unbroken quietness  
Reflect from ages the tranquillity  
That still inhabits the vast universe :  
Whether in icy immortality  
They glitter in the lightnings of the morn,  
Sheath'd in perpetual snow of perfect sheen ;  
Or naked, bare, — masses of sullen rock,  
They rise above a sea of stunted pines,  
Whence many an avalanche of shatter'd stone  
Descends, now stationary, motionless ;  
Vast floods of ruin loosen'd from the sky.  
All seems eternal now and peaceful there,

And the incredible high Powers that dwelt,  
In vastness and in light, among their peaks  
Have vanish'd like the lightning from the sky  
From their imperishable awful thrones,  
Where insects and faint butterflies dare wave  
The thinnest texture of ethereal wings,  
Aye, in the inmost fane of former brightness :  
Where puny man may climb with toil and pain,  
And dare adventure his frail limbs and life  
In the high places of primeval gods.  
The solemn harmony of Nature rolls  
Forever round those scarp'd and barren hills  
And thro' the vales ; O may my studied song,  
Some echo, some faint cadence, some slight tone,  
Win from that mighty sea of melody,  
And the stretch'd scrutiny of my rapt mind ;  
Some feeble accent, faint and far away, —  
That it may snatch a mortal utterance thus  
And murmur of the ocean of the world ;  
Like distant breathings of a seaborne shell  
Still haunted by the sound of winds and tides, —  
The mimic music of the universe.

## IV.

Lo ! what a ruin, broad and terrible  
And bright, the silent cataracts of time  
Wrought here upon the texture of the earth ;  
Exposing visibly the hollow shell

And rocky frame of a primeval world,  
In bony nakedness as if a sea  
Withdrawn should leave its ancient basin bare.  
Mysterious tides of sleep and death flow here,  
Thro' these still chasms flow, not here confused  
With the creative energies of life,  
But almost to the sense made audible  
In the tense silence of the wilderness,  
A faint attrition round the crumbling rocks,  
Glutting the viewless caves with voiceless streams.  
From their colossal monuments around  
The awful phantoms of ten thousand years  
Look down in mockery of human power.  
Domes, temples, pyramids, — dark gulfs between  
And stony vales, unfathomable deeps, —  
Rise here in hugest mimicry of Art  
And walls magnificent of looming rock ;  
Their naked desolation and decay  
Wrapp'd in pure color, — an ethereal veil  
Upon their crags, which Ruin itself has wrought  
In noble forms, Olympian, fair and large,  
Proportion'd to the calm desire of gods,  
In the simplicity of placid power.  
Strange scene of death, where vast destruction  
    takes  
Creative force, and builds enormous works ;  
Naked and stript, save where some tortur'd  
    cedar

Grasps with convulsive roots the dizzy edge  
In terror, leaning forth, and seems to gaze  
Far down with horror into the vast depths.

## V.

Thus thou, mysterious Chasm, thou hast lain  
Unnumber'd ages hid ; around thee spread  
Wide deserts, pathless woods, dark continents,  
Unguess'd by the old gazing Intellect,  
Yet the rude savage, taciturn and wild,  
In ignorant fear and superstitious awe,  
Heard thy invisible torrents and the voice  
Of subterranean and tormented streams,  
Woven in legends by the painted braves  
And witchlike squaws around a smouldering  
brand.

Imagination, kindling as she flies  
From peak to peak, from crag to crag, in vain  
Lights up thy features with her feeble ray,  
Wrapped in a dizzy trance where myriad shapes,  
Like shadows, shades of the material world,  
Wonders and visions, ruins and desolations,  
Peer dimly on the brain and dimly fade ;  
Mingling the vast, the terrible, the bright,  
Glimpses of desert wastes and burning sands,  
The nakedness of the unfountain'd moon,  
The fall of mighty rivers and the moan



Of midnight oceans at their endless task,  
Foaming in vain around terrestrial shores.

## VI.

Methinks a dreadful journey I did take  
In the abyss, between the Thunder Crags.  
Ruin on ruin hung above and cliffs  
Whose heads among the clouds stood fearfully ;  
Naked and scarr'd and rude ; their gloomy  
brows  
Held high together over the dim gulf,  
Touching their giant crags and jutting horns.  
At night the distant and declining sun,  
Haunting the clouds with his expiring rays,  
Shot forth his beams in anger ere he sank  
Behind the serried hills ; the sombre cliffs,  
Tall pinnacles, and rough-hewn obelisks,  
Flush'd with unearthly and inconstant fires ;  
While Darkness, stealing from the fallen sun,  
Crept forth to feed upon the tender light,  
And batten on the gleam of dying day :  
But soon the stars rekindled the dark sky,  
In numbers like the pigeons that return  
At dusk, from distant fields and groves,  
With thunder of their multitudinous wings,  
In myriads to their immemorial pines.  
Then all those haggard heights and gloomy gulfs  
And indistinguishable floods, were swiftly cross'd

By the white spirit of the wandering moon ;  
Whose soul look'd coldly down from her bright  
path,  
Amid the clusters of her meteors, —  
Like the scared image of a lady pale  
Awaken'd from dark dreams to gaze upon  
The awful spectre of an ancient wrong.

## VII.

Like marble crags upon Pentelicus,  
The wild and water-worn and moon-blanch'd  
cliffs  
Lifted their silent countenances bright  
Round the tormented stream that raged below,  
A legion of wild billows lifted fierce,  
Each like a vulture leaving his flat perch  
But chain'd to earth and swiftly falling back,  
Only to spring again more fiercely forth.  
Except for the torrent gnawing at its heart,  
In silence broken by its waves alone,  
Lay all that mighty wilderness asleep,  
Ghastly and rude and bare and desolate.  
Brightening the dark skirts of a sombre cloud,  
Far ran the moon along the infinite sky,  
Hastening to her eclipse ; while nature slept  
In tranc'd stillness strange and ominous.  
Anon the thunder rais'd a solemn voice  
In gloomy menace to the sullen earth ;

Then came a giant brood of venom'd clouds  
Herded by the dark genii of the storm,  
And roll'd and tumbled by the gloomy winds ;  
The lightning like a crooked vein of fire  
Fled thro' the depth and abysm of the night, —  
While many a cliff with dreadful countenance  
Look'd forth unmov'd from the unnatural sky.  
All night the tempest raged, nor ceased  
Until the fiery sun arose and glared  
Upon its sullen rear with angry eye,  
Where in the dreary west it brooded low,  
Drifting before the sunbeams and fresh gales,  
In cloudy hills on the horizon piled, —  
With its decaying cliffs and toppling crags,  
Decrepit whirlwinds and old wither'd walls.  
So all day long the burning sun pursued  
The ruin'd form of the old dying storm,  
As a harsh master with vindictive force  
Urges his gloomy cattle o'er the plain,  
Scattering them onward with a ruthless brand ;  
Tho' their unwieldly hulks propell'd along  
By insufficient fires and brutish minds  
With no effectual speed plod on before.

## NAPOLEON IN RUSSIA.

A POWERFUL empire rush'd to violent death  
With pomp, with splendor, and with might,  
Enamour'd of one victor's Delian wreath  
And dazzled by a meteor's light.

Victorious France with clustering laurel crown'd  
And dazed by glory's glittering show,  
Strode to the conquest of a world and found  
A sepulchre of untrod snow.

The sound and rumor of the menaced war  
Fill'd Europe like an echoing flood,  
Roll'd to the gates of Moscow where the Czar  
Call'd round him his wild Cossack brood.

Around the Niemen's wild and distant banks  
A thousand ensigns proudly stream'd ;  
A hundred legions stood in serried ranks,  
Their wrinkled fronts furrow'd and seam'd

By all the thunders of the continent,  
Since first the monarchs over-bold,

Round France, a struggling Titan blood besprent,  
Array'd the might of kingdoms old :

Warriors who forced the Turks to drop their  
shields

While forty centuries look'd down ;  
Who earlier trod the Belisarian fields  
Like Goths who won the Cæsar's crown.

Auxiliar Europe follow'd Cæsar's star ;  
So chain'd, up to the Capitol,  
Augustus, yok'd to his triumphal car,  
Dragged the Sigambri and the Gaul.

Twice batter'd Austria her legions lent,  
A haughty bride whose frigid vows,  
Before her country's altar, coldly blent  
The Corsican with her proud House.

Italia her Calabrian conscripts sent,  
Once more in her peninsula story,  
Like white Briseïs in Achilles' tent,  
The ravish'd prize of warlike glory.

Proud Prussia veil'd her hatred in her breast  
To serve a cold and alien king, —  
Her fierceness humbled like the falcon's crest  
Beneath the eagle's shadowing wing.

Led like a cheetah to the hunting field,  
Fierce Poland sought her ancient foe ;  
Eager to strike, beneath the brazen shield  
Of Theseus, a revengeful blow.

His chin upon his breast, with marble brow,  
The despot rode amid the ranks ;  
All round him Nature smiled, from field and  
bough,  
From stream and brier and blooming banks.

Above his head an eagle soar'd and wheel'd,  
The child of nature's cruel laws.  
Let eagles still be eagles, who would yield  
The sceptre to their hook'd claws.

The flatter'd chief whom humbled Europe fear'd,  
On him the giant wreath and gown  
Of Cæsar fitted ill, almost appear'd  
A tragic actor's robe and crown.

The Roman full ten cubits vaster stood  
Than he, who never could attain  
The first bald Cæsar's breadth and magnitude ;  
Half charlatan, half Charlemagne :

Altho' beneath his eye of cold command  
All Europe seem'd to quail and gasp ;

While kings received their sceptres from his  
 hand,  
 And Fate seem'd strangled in his grasp.

The meteor light that dazzled France dazed him ;  
 Too long he snuff'd the incense up ;  
 His thirst he could not quench, tho' to the brim  
 Thrice Fortune fill'd her golden cup.

The hero who seem'd cast in antique mould,  
 Whom Paris welcom'd like a bride,  
 Became the despot, politic and cold,  
 And grounded in colossal pride.

And yet that marble mind had not yet lost  
 All its original charm and grace ;  
 Beauty and power, aggrandized at such cost,  
 Yet clung to that despotic face.

Thro' carnage he would ride to lawless sway,  
 Tho' savage Nature shriek'd in wrath ;  
 Tho' burning towns and hamlets mark'd his way,  
 And myriads rotted in his path.

Grim Nature round the lurid landscape saw  
 Her trampled fields of wheat and corn,  
 Her harvest trodden into wretched straw,  
 Her ruin'd gardens stript and torn.

Great Nature, mother of the Russian race,  
Saw Moscow burn and Smolensk razed ;  
She like a Memphian image rear'd her face  
Beyond the flat illimitable waste,

Like the colossal Sphinx whose form appears  
Far off at dusk to Arab bands,  
Scarred by six thousand unimagi'n'd years,  
Across the lone and level sands.

Deep scorn upon her brooding spirit fell  
And darkness, like the shades that lie  
Upon some wide o'ershadow'd stream and tell  
A cloud has crept into the sky.

She laugh'd with the vast laughter of the gods,  
A laughter huge and terrible, —  
Until the rain shook down upon the sods  
And turn'd to hailstones as it fell ;

Until the leaves dropp'd wither'd from the trees ;  
Till the bare woods clash'd in the sky,  
And the black waves of the Boristhenes  
Shook into crystals icily ;

Until the snowflakes flutter'd from the cloud  
On wood and hill and endless plain ;  
Muffling beneath a cold white glittering shroud  
The mounds and hillocks of the slain,



The shatter'd myriads lock'd in the embrace  
 Of death, the broken wheels and helms, —  
 Strew'd like the relics of a fallen race  
 In Thebes' or Memphis' desert realms.

Swept on and tortured by the pangs of hell,  
 The gloom of an immense despair  
 Upon the host of the invaders fell ;  
 The brow of youth was cleft with care,

The young, leaning their foreheads to their guns,  
 Blew out their brains beside the road ;  
 The harden'd fought each other like the sons  
 Of Belial, urged by one fell goad.

By troops and rows they sank ; their hollow eyes,  
 Beneath thick clots of matted hair,  
 Burned hotly in their dying agonies,  
 Bright with the fierceness of despair.

Earth knows them not forever, they are sped ;  
 Inwrapt in blackest shades of night ;  
 The viewless spirits of the mighty dead  
 Fill her ten-fold with joy and might.

## HYMN OF NATURE.

I SPRANG to life with deep voic'd savage thunder ;  
    Mine the perpetual, unpolled flame  
That feeds the heart of earth in caverns under  
    Her huge and hollow hills of fearful fame :  
Hecla and Ætna and the vast Peruvian chain, —  
    With frozen fiery streams and furrow'd  
        cheeks ;  
Brought forth by me in agony and pain, —  
    Fire-girt, frost-bound, imperishable peaks,  
    Under which my molten ocean  
    Flows with an incessant motion.

I heap with embers the inviolate hearth ;  
    My light, as in a mirror, the blue noon  
Makes visible, and the illumin'd earth,  
    The fiery sun and pale complexion'd moon.  
At my eternal heat and seminal glow,  
    Like an old witch wife over a magic fire,  
With veins collaps'd and blood-streams thick and  
    slow, —  
    Humanity renews her youth's desire ;  
    The daemon I, from whose fierce breath  
    She flies as from the angel Death.

With seasonable warmth the tender shoots  
I tempt, when from the mould bright heads  
are thrust,

In early spring; and warm the down-sheath'd  
roots

Beneath the wintry earth's cold frozen crust.  
Pavilion'd in the setting sun, I robe

The seas in gold, and the enkindled skies  
Are fill'd with my bright presence, like the  
globe

Of some great gem with flame of mingled dyes.

I blend the hues of all bright flowers, —

Of insects' wings and rainbow showers.

I brew the fluid, swift, invisible,

That bears report upon its rapid streams ; —

Mercurial messenger whose magic spell

Fills the attentive mind with many dreams ;

With whose explosive light the heavens are  
shaken,

Like hoary ocean to its utmost deep,

When with huge whirlpools the gigantic Kraken

Uprises from his immemorial sleep ;

Like some new-born volcanic isle

Lifting vast seas for many a mile.

I track the swift clouds to their secret lair,

And speed o'er the blue sea the far white  
sails ;

With sweet winds medicine the torpid air,  
And cool earth's dædal shores with sea-born  
gales ;

I waft the pine germs to their farthest bowers ;  
And breathing over fragrant verdurous leas,  
I bring the pollen to the lovesick flowers,  
Stealing the wonted office of the bees ;  
And wake the hidden harmony of things  
With touches from my murmuring wings.

My spirit moaneth when the brooding storm,  
In ominous quiet, gathers up its might ;  
Before the fierce Typhoon my shadowy form  
Flies screaming thro' the dim and dreadful  
night ;

And as I suck sweet scents from herb and tree,  
I breathe and scatter from my tainted breath,  
Foul from dead growths, corrupt mortality, —  
The seeds of pestilence and death ;  
Whose unclean fruit are corpses cold,  
Decaying in the graveyard mould.

I wake the flowers with baths of morning dew, —  
And feed the ice-cold urns of rocky brooks  
In dark green glens among the mountains blue ;  
From me damp meadows borrow their bright  
looks ;

I gather the warm rains from the dim deep,

Which carrier clouds bear swiftly to the land;  
Thro' secret caverns underground I creep  
And plant the Oasis in desert sand,  
Islands of green the camel loves, —  
Cold bubbling wells and gracile groves.

I guard the giant floods and keep them strong,  
By whose eternal motion and pure streams  
The Earth sustains herself in power and song,  
And life in every cleft and crevice teems;  
I guide the ebbing tides to their abyss  
And bring them back with safety to the shore,  
Tho' their obedient waters boil and hiss,  
And beat upon the stubborn stones, and roar  
As if the rock were ribs of oak  
Which they in sport have often broke.

Yet once I loos'd their chains when wild and  
lone,  
From pole to pole, the liberated flood,  
Where no bright sail or peaky islet shone, —  
Rolled its unbroken billows unwithstood.  
Divine my strength, yet gentler offices  
Invite me now, — to foster and renew, —  
With the collected power of mighty seas,  
And with the tiny drops of rain and dew;  
With many soft and still mutations,  
And milder floods and inundations.

In emerald caverns, crystalline and bright,  
I guard the whirling axle of the sphere,  
Beneath an arch of faint magnetic light ;  
There icy peaks like diamond uprear,  
In the calm glitter of an arctic night,  
Their beaming pinnacles ; and far and near,  
Gleam the eternal snow-fields pure and bright.  
No dissonant voices vex me, but I hear  
The strong young icebergs roar and leap,  
With thunder to the shaken deep.

Each year, on silent pinions issuing forth,  
I guide the biting wind and killing frost,  
Southward from their dark regions at the north.  
Fair shines the realm by those bright spirits  
    crost,  
Gleaming with gold and purple and vermillion,  
Like blazoned canopies and banners flung  
Round some great king's imperial pavilion ;  
Or later like a glittering mirror hung  
Facing the fiery sun at noon,  
Or in the splendor of the moon.

## SHIFTING FREIGHT AT MIDNIGHT.

PANTING, puffing, to and fro,  
In the valley far below,  
Where the moonlit waters glow,  
Is a sound like moving Dragons :  
'T is the earthquake-footed steeds,  
Stallions of invention's breeds,  
At their midnight toils ; the cry  
Of their restless energy,  
And the rumble of their wagons.

Hearken to the distant beat  
Of their fiery hearts and feet, —  
Cries and shrieks and groanings meet  
For monsters cursed with toil and pain ;  
Or nocturnal beasts of blood  
In the jungle and the wood,  
Roaring, snorting, as they drink  
At the moonlit river's brink,  
Trampling down the reeds and cane.

Lo ! each smoky charioteer  
Leads his charger without fear,  
In the darkness crashing near,

Brazen, docile, breathing flame.  
 No curb profane or iron checks  
 Need embrace their mighty necks,  
 No sharp spur do they require,  
 Fed by the Promethean fire, —  
 Spirits powerful and tame.

See ! like meteors they flare,  
 Rushing to their midnight lair,  
 With a trail like fiery hair,  
     And one Cyclops eyeball bright ;  
 Spurning with their iron hoofs  
 River arches whose dim roofs  
 Tremble with their speed and thunder  
 As the night is riven asunder  
     By the fury of their flight.

Clanging warning bells they roll,  
 Like a tocsin of the soul  
 Messengers of evil toll,  
     Spurring thro' a sleeping town ;  
 Wailing to the midnight air  
 Like a spirit in despair,  
 Or an eagle whose fierce screams  
 Float upon the tempest's streams,  
     From his eyrie drifting down.

In what cavern of the night,  
 By the furnace' fiery light, —



By what shapes or men of might  
Shall these iron steeds be stall'd ?  
Its dark roof thick smoke enshrouds,  
And rolling vapor like dim clouds ;  
Underneath the gloom is shot  
With beams of brightness burning hot,  
From red embers iron wall'd.

In the fiery heat and glow  
Rills of burning ashes flow ;  
Shadowy figures to and fro  
Thro' the flickering firelight flit :  
Cloudy wreaths of scalding steam  
Curl aloft, and brasses gleam ;  
Drawn from each tormented breast  
The eager fires, at last they rest,  
Till anew fierce fires are lit.

There like sleepers in a tomb,  
When the light has left the gloom,  
Their gigantic statues loom,  
After their wild swift career.  
Closed their Cyclops eye in sleep,  
Wrapped in slumber long and deep,  
Cold, immovable, they stand,  
A colossal, mail-clad band, —  
Left by the last charioteer.

## EPIGRAMS.

ALL bones of all men Earth receives  
In her broad lap with fallen leaves,  
But when her debt to death is paid  
Where shall her giant limbs be laid ?

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THE feuds of Ghibelline and Guelph  
Divide the suffrage of the world,  
But courage draws men to itself  
Whatever pennant is unfurl'd.

---

HER fate is fixed by laws of blood,  
In gentle actions to express  
The finer sense of womanhood,  
A woman's tenderness.

---

UNTO the rich all tribute bear,  
But naught they bring to banish care.

WHEN simple tastes begin to tire  
The grinning Devil stirs his fire.

---

IF one labor late and early  
For the world's behoof,  
Not a few, unkind and surly,  
May bid him stand aloof.



LATER SONNETS.



## LATER SONNETS.

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### LA PÉROUSE.

ACROSS the vast of ocean, on what shore  
Are strewn the wrecks of thy disastrous ships,  
Blown when the moon and stars were in eclipse  
Beyond the stormy Cape and seen no more?  
For cruel Fate swung to a gloomy door,  
And Fame her finger press'd upon her lips,  
And Death conceal'd them where the cold sea  
    dips  
Down to the Pole and deserts wild and frore.  
Among the roots of ocean, Mystery  
Reach'd her long arms and seiz'd them, or the  
    tide  
Yet gnaws their ribs upon some chill seaside;  
Or frozen stiff with all their crews they lie  
Where the keen stars, frost-bitten in the sky,  
Gleam brightly over ice-floes weird and wide.

## FIGURES IN THE RAIN.

WITHOUT these tavern windows, dim and drear,  
While I sit sipping from this rosy glass,  
The people throng, a busy rainy mass, —  
To me, “a looker on in Vienna here,”  
Within their gates a stranger, they appear  
No more than insects in among the grass,  
Which to and fro upon their errands pass,  
A sight of little meaning, darkly clear.  
The dreams that have their dwelling in this cup  
More real seem than each embodied Soul,  
Obscurely seen, an undeciphered scroll,  
Frail as grey mists before the sun is up; —  
Nay, I myself, who watch and think and sup,  
Seem but a ghost, fresh from old Charon’s toll.



## “THE CHRONICLE OF WASTED TIME.”

GONE is the glamour of the antique world  
When Earth was young ; when the Hesperides  
Lay somewhere cinctur'd by the purple seas,  
Appled with golden fruit and spiced and  
pearled, —

Where now the huge Atlantic wave is hurl'd ;  
When Jason voyaged for the Fleece of Gold,  
And for the Trojan war, in Argos old,  
The fleets of Greece their fluttering sails unfurl'd.  
Yet still of ancient suns the embalm'd light  
Is prison'd fair, in books or parchment roll,  
Color'd from that illuminated scroll  
Which rapt Mnemosyne with pencil bright  
Emblazon'd with the hues of old Romance,  
The tinctur'd gold and sable tints of chance.

## SOLITUDE.

THERE is a solitude where naught intrudes,  
In the high Alps, — (unless, tho' rarely, creep  
The Ibex hunters up the icy steep) ;  
Among the wrecks of Time's unresting feuds ;  
Forums and fanes where Desolation broods ;  
The bleaching bones of cities, buried deep  
In desert sands : Realms of the Dead where sleep  
Innumerable voiceless multitudes.  
Such scenes some pleasing memories allow,  
Huge hills, rock guarded, frowning brow to  
brow, —  
Footprints of mighty Empires overthrown, —  
Some thoughts sublime, — some link 'twixt then  
and now :  
But in the crowded streets, depress'd, un-  
known, —  
'T is there the lonely Soul seems most alone.

## WISHED-FOR CHANGE.

*"Otium bello furiosa Thrace."*

FOR ease sighs he who, in Atlantic seas  
Driven by tempests, seeks with anxious eye  
Orion and Arcturus in the sky ;  
For ease sighs war-worn Telamon, — for ease  
In Tempe or the wave-wash'd Cyclades ;  
But vex'd with the dull couch of Luxury,  
And ill at rest, for Pontic seas we sigh,  
For action and rude toils, unwont to please.  
Then with high hopes we hail storms drawing  
near,

View signs unmoved that fright the augurs pale,  
The staring entrails of ill-omen'd rams :  
Then lighter seem the shield and heavy spear,  
The formidable casque and frock of mail,  
Than silks, or the soft woven fleece of lambs.

## THE INVITATION.

Now that the frost has stript the leafless tree, —  
Wachusett stands white in deep fallen snow, —  
Oh, where on cheerless evenings wilt thou go,  
To talk and sup and, from ambition free,  
Aloof from fickle Fortune's fretful sea,  
Forget the fabulous thought and fame and gold,  
The barren ways and chill, the wintry wold,  
The naked season's bleak sterility?  
No pomp is mine, yet Beauty shall not fail  
To lend a charm if here thy feet incline;  
With books, the choicest few in rich attire, —  
In gold and crimson from some famous sale;  
A snow-white cloth, with Californian wine;  
Some silver heirlooms and a hickory fire.

## EMBATTLED DAYS.

NOT crown'd with blossoms of the vernal year,  
And garlands woven for a festival,  
This Hour salutes the Hours eventual,  
But plumed and helmeted with sword and spear,  
Hauberk and frock of mail and warlike gear.  
To-day at least is arm'd for victory,  
Thron'd high and dais'd in the galaxy,  
Of any rose-crown'd hour the laurel'd peer.  
Behold her chariot waits, the harness'd yoke  
Paw the void air and arch their shining necks,  
Impatient, fretting vainly the loose checks.  
What hand shall trammel them? What mortal  
stroke  
Strike from her car the eager charioteer,  
Hurl'd on by plunging steeds in full career?

## “MALIGN VICISSITUDE.”

THE dreams that haunt the bottom of this bowl,  
The mystic brood of wine and revery  
Which are my love yet half mine enemy,  
Enchantresses and beggars of my soul,  
To-day seem not more brief than Hadrian's mole  
Or Karnac's temple. Mutability  
Is writ in changing sky and flowing sea,  
In rocks and trees and rivers as they roll.  
Libations to the Muse I pour and drink :  
She comes and thrills my heart with vain regret ;  
For all her song seems breathing of decay,  
Of time in whose deep ocean all things sink,  
Of ruin'd tower and crumbling parapet,  
Of vanish'd springs and days long pass'd away.

## TRAGIC POWER.

LIKE storms that show the mountain grim and  
bare,  
Seen thro' the ragged rents of cloudy sky,  
In austere form of naked majesty,  
Each lifted crag and peak and rocky stair, —  
So dark vicissitude and torturing care,  
The storms that round some battling Titan roll,  
Reveal the vastness of a lofty Soul  
Cross'd by the gods and struggling with despair.  
Such power adorns the rugged peaks of Mind  
On which in vain the gods hurl sleet and fire ;  
Like Samson in Philistine bonds led blind,  
Or Saturn struggling with afflictions dire,  
Prometheus chain'd upon his barren pile,  
Or Philoctetes on his desert isle.

## ULYSSES.

LET Circe sup with her enchanted guests ;  
Their swords are girded up in rusty sheaves, —  
The cobwebs gather round their horsehair  
    crests, —  
Their faded banners hang like yellowing leaves ;  
To lick their hands the fawning leopard crawls,  
The tawny panther from Assyrian fields ;  
Hung up at feasts and Bromian festivals  
Like blazon'd scutcheons are their brazen shields.  
Tired of the long thwarts and Ciconian wars,  
Mindful of Cyclops and his loathsome grot,  
Sloth grips them sure : me may Tartessian seas  
Wash far away beneath Iberian stars.  
Here let them loll, me may the gods allot  
The Argive ship-planks for my bed of ease.



## NIGHTFALL AT POTTER'S.

WITHIN the pines I stood and saw the Night  
Dispute with Twilight for the Day's dominions ;  
With a few flaps of its tempestuous pinions  
The storm had ceased ; — each inaccessible  
height

Flash'd with the rains ; — the clouds with list-  
less might

Hung low about the sun's funereal pyre,  
Their gloomy countenances tinged with fire, —  
Broken and barr'd with melancholy light.

Toppling about the wet and dreary west  
Rose many a rocky peak and rugged crest ;  
With all its crags, Moat Mountain tower'd for-  
lorn, —

Chocorua's sharp and mutilated horn, —  
While Nature's moist and all-beholding eye  
Kept watch from the remote mysterious sky.

## A STORM IN THE MOUNTAINS.

THE vast and sombre company of clouds,  
Among the mountains brooding gloomily,  
Veiling the giant peaks in murky shrouds, —  
All day have hatched a dark conspiracy  
Against calm Nature. See ! they leave the steep,  
Their forms gigantic grown, and rolling nigher,  
With muffled thunder, menacing and deep, —  
And furtive flickering tongues of angry fire.  
Jamming the blast before them in one wave,  
As if the storm had but one mighty breath, —  
With edges torn and flying, on they rave,  
In awful beauty ; the dark vale beneath  
Is fill'd with their wild fury, — wide around  
A whirling chasm, — dark, disturbed, profound.

## POINT SUBLIME, COLORADO CAÑON.

## I.

RAINBOW-HUED, ragged, wild, and terrible,  
The giant gulf lies open at my feet ;  
A wilderness of ruins that repeat  
All architectural forms, — pinnacle  
And pyramid and tower ; the rocky shell  
And ribs of some old crumbled world, replete  
With horror, scorched by an intolerable heat : —  
Some agony of Nature here befell !  
The ponderous Earth alone in some fierce throe,  
Convulsion, paroxysm, passion fit, —  
Has force to shatter thus ! Nay, far below,  
The petty cause of the enormous pit,  
Lost, buried in the gloom itself hath made,  
The river burrows in eternal shade.

## II.

The power that built above the cloudy skies  
Andes and Caucasus with heads of snow,  
Wrought here with equal strength in earth below,  
And dug th' abyss by giant contraries ;

Opening the mouths of monstrous cavities,  
Whose depths profound are shut in walls which  
          throw

Perpetual gloom ; driving the rocks to flow  
Like water to the seas whence they did rise.  
Nature here turned upon herself with beak  
And claw, and tore her breast in blind despair ;  
Her very entrails lie expos'd and bare,  
The stony structure of a world antique,  
Sculptur'd in mighty forms of dome and peak,  
Uplifted far below in liquid air.

## MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPE.

ONCE more the sunset's melancholy flame  
Burns on the ridges of this mountain'd world ;  
Watched by the dying storm : no smoke upcurl'd  
Tells here of hearth and home ; no time can  
tame  
These rugged hills, whose forms are still the  
same,  
Tho' bleaker grown, as when they were uphurl'd  
When Fire a reddening canopy unfurl'd  
O'er these wild glens, which ages since became  
A haunt of sullen peace. Yet awful still  
Is each immense and desolated hill ;  
More wild the sunset gleams thro' these dark  
bowers ;  
More awful rolls the storm thro' these stern  
dales,  
Round crags and peaks and thunder-riven vales,  
The ruin'd thrones and seats of vanish'd Powers.

## MOONRISE ON THE RIVER.

LAST night beside the river's dewy marge,  
Afloat among the rushes tall and rank,  
The broad-leav'd water plants and lilies dank, —  
I watch'd the moon uplifting, round and large,  
The great scarr'd vision of her shining targe,  
In ancient beauty, 'bove a grassy bank  
Whose crest bore ferns which ever rose and sank  
With the fresh wind that shook the stream's mi-  
rage.

Long time I saw their sable plumes eclipse  
The patient brightness of its placid disk,  
As the cold zephyr toss'd their riotous tops,  
One way together sway'd their feathery tips, —  
While whippoorwills with music loud and brisk  
Shrill'd their repeated song of several stops.

## THE FIRST THAW IN SPRING.

BENEATH the south wind and the sun's warm ray  
Earth slowly uncongeals ; the aged snow  
In dissolution falls ; the loud brooks flow  
Thro' hollow'd ice caves pitted with decay ;  
A dripping moisture wraps the humid day ;  
The once white fields their dusky lining show,  
In dreary spots. How large looks yonder crow  
Upon the elm tree ere he flits away.  
The rainy lights shine thro' the naked trees,  
The cold damp woods soak'd by the thawing  
breeze ;  
Along the miry road the wheel-ruts gleam,  
And slushy pools ; the shallow wayside stream  
Sings in its muddy channel, and on high  
The clouds float lazily across the sky.

## THE DAY'S MESSAGE.

No piety, no human power, can stay  
Time's rapid flight, that to eternity  
Flows on, like rivulets that seek the sea.  
Whether one scatter them like chaff, or weigh  
Each moment miserly, the last relay  
Is quickly spent ; like sand in the hour-glass  
The years slip by, like shows that quickly pass  
Seen from express trains in the blaze of day.  
Since it is sure to-morrow we must die,  
Eat thou and drink ; the rose is not less fair  
Because its time is brief, which scarce can bear  
Some careless touch, or casual breeze of fate ;  
Is to itself as sweet as tho' its date  
With sun and moon and changeless stars might  
vie.



## THE SOUL'S DECADENCE.

THE hero on the throne of Cyrus sits,  
In purple tunic aping Persian kings ;  
The fiery soul that soar'd at Austerlitz  
Trails on the Russian ground his broken wings,  
Crush'd by the very vastness of his fate ;  
The skin-clad zealot and fierce anchorite  
Becomes the full-faced priest of later date,  
The Cardinal succeeds the cenobite.  
So when the flatter'd spirit of Truth decays,  
The cause for which the martyr died becomes  
The selfish creed of comfortable homes.  
This is the curse that crowns victorious days —  
Success is overwhelmed with apathy,  
The victor swallow'd up in victory.

## LIFE IN THE WORLD.

THE ragged birthmarks of the ancient hills,  
The wreck'd volcano hung with Pele's hair,  
The sullen thunder-stricken woods and rills,  
The terror brooding in the silent air ;  
The track of great storms traveling in the night,  
The weltering chaos ever lurking near  
The little household gods and candle-light, —  
These fill the hollows of the heart with fear.  
Yet Life, like a torch shaken in the blast,  
Tho' trembling in the whirls and vortices,  
Burns brightly in its socket to the last ;  
Immortal as the shining Pleiades,  
Or Aldebaran, that eternal gem  
In night's tiara and proud diadem.

## PROMETHEUS.

ETERNAL torment and eternal youth  
Keep always open wide my upturn'd eyes ;  
Pale Death, turn'd back by the mad Furies' cries,  
Stands off and looks at me with pity and ruth.  
The tyrant's vengeance like a serpent's tooth  
Tears up my heart, and ghastly shapes arise  
From the abyss to mock my agonies,  
Press home the monstrous and enormous truth.  
The vast, blank, pitiless skies beat down by  
day, —  
Night with her shining stars no slumber brings ;  
While terror its eternal vigil keeps,  
Sits hearkening for the rush of powerful wings,  
What time, wheeling among the frozen steeps,  
Heaven's wing'd hound smells out his helpless  
prey.





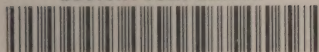








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